

Funding Ideas for Corporate or Local Business Partners

Many companies focus their corporate philanthropic efforts on education. Members of the business community are very aware that they need educated and motivated workers—now and in the future. Because *Career Choices* helps students prepare for the workplace, it is a wonderful vehicle for soliciting corporate sponsorship. Here's one plan for researching and executing a corporate funding campaign.

Find out which corporations do business in your community, and what local businesses are prominent. The best place to start your research is with the Chamber of Commerce or the Better Business Bureau. Keep an eye on the local media to see which companies are in the news.

Once you've narrowed your choice to two or three prospects, use your own network of peers, parents, and friends to see if you can get an introduction to the CEO, director of public relations, or director of community relations. If you cannot get an introduction, make an appointment to see the director of community relations anyway.

When you pay your first visit, take along a complete set of the *Career Choices* textbooks, a copy of the Standards for a Freshman Transition Course, and a short PowerPoint presentation. Show the online video *The Key to Dropout Prevention: The 10-year Plan*, found on The Teachers' Lounge. These items are wonderful "props" for your presentation because the funding source can quickly see what you intend to accomplish in your program.

Besides talking about the program, be sure to ask questions and listen carefully to what the funder has to say. You'll want to incorporate his or her ideas into your written proposal, which should arrive on their desk within a few days of your interview.

In developing your proposal, don't be shy. Remember, you are not asking for a lot of money by most corporate standards, and most businesses make donations in the community. However, they are also looking for publicity and an opportunity to generate good public relations. It is imperative that you solicit media attention for your program throughout the year (newspaper articles, TV news stories, etc.). Anywhere your *Career Choices* program is mentioned, be sure to add the tagline "Funded by the XYZ Corporation." The more you do this, the more likely the business or corporation is to fund your program year after year.

Other Local Funding Sources

Foundation Funding

While the first thing that comes to mind may be the large foundations we all hear about in the news, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation or the Carnegie Foundation, they are unlikely to fund a local effort. A local or regional foundation whose mission is education is more likely to support efforts helping local students become college and career ready and economically self-sufficient.

The process for securing local foundation funding is very similar to corporate funding. Ask an attorney, to identify the local legal professionals most likely to help manage family foundations. Once you've identified a possible local foundation, follow their requirements for submitting a request. Sometimes it's as simple as submitting a letter of proposal with supporting documentation.

Community Service Organizations

Community service organizations are often an untapped source of financial support and a source for volunteers to mentor students, provide internships, or speak to your classes. Once you find a community service organization supportive of your goals, ask them to consider funding your *Career Choices* workbooks each year. For more information, see pages 13/5–13/9 in *Instructor's and Administrator's Guide for Career Choices and My10yearPlan.com*®.

Student Funding

Many districts allow for student lab fees to cover the purchase of consumable supplies. As a result, some schools have students purchase their own copies of the *Workbook and Portfolio*. If your district has a similar provision, you might use this strategy to fund part of your *Career Choices* program.

Consider seeking supplemental funding from a community service organization to purchase copies of the *Workbook and Portfolio* for students who can't afford to buy their own.